

Celts place eighth at Creekside meet



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings
McNary runner Benjamin Standley finished 43rd at the Creekside Cross Classic on Wednesday, Oct. 23.

The McNary boys cross country team took eighth place out of 22 teams at the first annual Creekside Cross Classic at Creekside Golf Club on Wednesday, Oct. 23.

Freshman Connor Roop had the top time for the Celtics, finishing in 34th with a time of 17:29.70, which was a new personal-best. Benjamin Standley placed 43rd (17:46.7) and Ethan Whalen finished 49th (18:07.70).

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provided some fireworks for the crowd at Celtic Stadium.

On the ensuing kickoff, Manny De-Dios received the ball, reversed his field and handed off to Contreras, who raced up the sideline after breaking a couple tackles and got all the way down to the Wolverines 28-yard line.

Two plays later, Contreras found the end zone on an eight-yard pass from Allen, allowing the Panthers to retake the lead at 16-8.

“One of our biggest weapons is Izeyah. Even when he doesn’t have the football, he’s a great distraction,” Carr said.

Contreras scored again on a two-yard touchdown reception before the half after the Claggett Creek defense made a key stop as the Panthers took a 22-8 lead into the locker room.

“That was probably our best game of the year,” Allen said. “Our blocking was amazing today.”

It looked like Claggett Creek was going to put the game out of reach when they marched into the red zone on their first drive of the third quarter.

But the Wolverines recovered a fumble on a muffed snap to get the ball back, which ended up being a game-changing turnover.

With the help of the physicality of their offensive line, Whiteaker pounded the ball between the tackles. Their 18-play drive took



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings
Whiteaker running back Marquis Jackson drags a pair of Claggett Creek defenders towards the end zone. Jackson had 121 rushing yards and two touchdowns in the game.

more than seven minutes off the clock, with Jackson finishing thing off with a two-yard run to make it a one possession game with 4:33 remaining.

“We gave them all they could handle in the second half. I was very proud of the effort that they made,” Whiteaker head coach Thomas Larimer said.

“I love how we brought it back in the second half,” Jackson added.

What once was a comfortable lead turned into a time of stress for the Panthers, especially when they faced a fourth-and-13 near midfield with just over three minutes remaining.

Not wanting to put his tired defense back on the field, Carr elected to go for it on fourth down.

Throughout the season, Allen almost always targeted Contreras when faced with a passing situation. This time, however, Allen relied on his twin brother, Ben, to make the most important play of the game.

Allen took the snap, rolled to his right and threw on the run for his brother, who was running up the seam.

The pass was high and initially looked to be out of reach, but Ben Allen reached up and made an incredible one-handed catch with his left hand for a 15-yard gain,

allowing the Panthers to move the chains — and the clock.

“I knew that we needed a first down. We didn’t want to give the ball back to Whiteaker. All I was trying to do was make the catch so we could run out the clock,” Ben Allen said.

Two plays later, Contreras got a first down on a three-yard rush, giving the Wolverines the ability to run out the rest of the clock.

“Ben is going to make that catch nine out of 10 times. He’s just very consistent. That is why we ran that play in that situation. It was a little bit of a high pass, but he went up there and snagged it to win the game,” Carr said.

Claggett Creek moved to 5-1 with the win and Whiteaker dropped to 3-3 with the loss.

“I was really proud that are kids hung in there until the very end. I don’t think Claggett felt good about their lead until the last minute of the game,” Larimer said.

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